

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for tracking facsimile jobs, comprising the steps of:

(a) determining whether the return message is associated with the prepared message that originated at the originating device, and

(b) in response to an affirmative determination in step (a), interpreting the return message as an incoming message not intended for printing and processing the return message according to a first predetermined configuration of the originating device;

whereby in response to a negative determination in step (b), an incoming message is interpreted as a valid message intended for printing and is processed according to a second predetermined configuration of the originating device.

2. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the distinguishing step further comprises the step of detecting the presence of information indicative of the error condition in the return message.

3. The method of **claim 2**, further comprising the step of reporting the arrival of the return message by use of a error reporting mechanism.

4. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the step (b) further comprises the step of disallowing printing of the return message.

5. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the return message includes first information indicative of its destination address and second information indicative of its originating address, and further comprising the steps of:

comparing the first and second information;

in response to the comparison, interpreting a match of the first and second information as being the result of a round-trip job which originated at the originating device and which is intended for printing; and

in response to the match of the first and second information, processing the return message according to the second predetermined configuration.

6. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the transmitting step further comprises transmitting the prepared message as a facsimile communication over a telephone network.

7. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the transmitting step further comprises transmitting the prepared message as a facsimile communication over a wide area network.

8. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the transmitting step further comprises transmitting the prepared message as an Internet facsimile message over the Internet.

9. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the preparation of the prepared message further comprises embedding indicia in the prepared message, with such indicia being suitable for subsequent examination by the originating device in order to determine whether the return message originated from the originating device.

10. The method of **claim 9**, wherein the embedded information is provided in the form of a plurality of redundant indicia.

11. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the distinguishing step further comprises the step of extracting information indicative of an error condition from a plurality of locations within the return message.

12. The method of **claim 11**, wherein the extracting step further comprises extracting information indicative of an error condition from within at least one of a message header, a message identification, an envelope identification, a Delivery Status Notification (DSN), and a Message Delivery Notification (MDN).